1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

attempted any criticism or comment on the work of others except on special occasions when my own information is lacking or when I am uncertain as to the truth of their statements. Except in those cases in which I definitely refer to the work of others, every statement made in this book is the outcome of my own inquiry or observation. Whenever my account differs from those of others, it may be accepted that I have inquired into the discrepancy and that my account represents the result of a careful investigation.

As some of the accounts of the Todas were written many years ago, there is always the possibility that two dissimilar accounts may both be true and that the differences may represent changes in custom with lapse of time. There is one fact, however, which makes it probable that this explanation of discrepancies is not the true one. The accounts of the Todas which show the closest correspondence with my own are some of the earliest, especially the book of Captain Harkness, published in 1832, and the papers of Bernhard Schmid and C. F. Muzzy, published in 1837 and 1844 respectively. In many cases my work agrees more closely with these than with the accounts of later observers.

This is, perhaps, a suitable place to mention what I believe to be the chief source of error in previous accounts of the Todas. In their extensive intercourse with the Badagas, the Todas use the language of this people, with which they appear to be perfectly familiar. The Toda language is very difficult to understand, and the literature shows that from the first, most of those who have investigated Toda customs have used the Badaga language or Tamil as their means of communication. Every Toda village, every Toda institution or office, and nearly every object used by the Todas has its Badaga name as well as its proper Toda name, and, owing to intercourse through the intermediation of the Badagas, these names have come to be used not only by nearly all who have written on the Todas, but also in official documents connected with the people.

The names by which the Toda villages are known to Europeans are always the Badaga names and not those of

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

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the Todas, and similarly with the names of institutions such as clans, dairies, or ceremonies. The practice of giving Badaga names in their intercourse with Europeans has become so engrained that a Toda invariably uses these names when speaking to a European. During the first few weeks of my work, I received exclusively Badaga names, and to the end of my visit, whenever I visited a new district, the Badaga names would crop up till the people found that I wanted Toda and not Badaga. Kiunievan, who was the chief informant of Mr. Breeks in 1872, is still alive, and when I asked him why he gave Mr. Breeks the Badaga names in every case, he answered "He did not seem to want anything else," and this answer seems to me to give the clue to much of the error which has found its way into many of the accounts which have been given of the Todas.

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One of the most serious errors which has arisen in this way is one connected with the Toda clans. Every account which has been given of the clan-system of the Todas is that of a system which is current among the Badagas as the Toda system, but has only a limited correspondence with the actual system as it is in use among the Todas themselves. Every Toda, if asked by a European to what clan or division he belongs, will promptly give his division according to the Badaga classification, and this has led to the incorporation of this classification in all the accounts of the Todas which deal with their social organisation.

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Some words are necessary about the general plan of the book. I should have preferred to begin with the social organisation, and to approach the religious aspect of the life of the Todas through the ceremonies accompanying the chief incidents of life, including birth, marriage, and death. The ideas borrowed from the ritual of the dairy, however, so pervade the whole of Toda ceremonial, that I have been obliged to consider the ritual of the dairy at an early stage. After a preliminary chapter sketching the general character and life of the people, I have therefore given a full description of the elaborate ceremonial which centres round the dairy; and on this follow the accounts of other ceremonies and sacred institutions and a general discussion of the

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

fact, a diviner necessarily gives up his divining if he becomes a *palol*.[1]

Each of the *teuol* is believed to be possessed by a special god when he falls into the divining frenzy, and when in this state it is said that the diviner does not, as a rule, speak in his own language, but in some other, most commonly in Malayalam or one of its dialects. The following are those who are at present credited with the power of divination :—

Midjkudr (63) of Piedr, who is inspired by the gods Kulinkars and Petkon. He speaks in Malayalam, and he does not appear to have succeeded anyone else as *teuol*. He is the most successful of those who are at present practising the art, and played the chief part in all the divining which took place during my visit.

Tadrners (60) of Kuudr, inspired by Ethrol and Arivili, succeeded his mother's father, Kasorivan (66) of Kusharf. He is said to speak the language of people whom the Todas call Mondardsetipol living in the Wainad, a language which appears to be a dialect of Malayalam.

Pangudr (66) of Kusharf, also succeeded Kasorivan, his grandfather, and is inspired by Petkon and Meilitars. There was some doubt as to the language used by him.

Ethgudr (52) of Kuudr is inspired by Arivili, and, like Tadrners, speaks the language of the Mondardsetipol.

Terkudr (63) of Piedr, inspired by Teipakh, the river god, succeeded his grandfather Keitolv. When inspired, his speech is like the babbling of a running river, "like the river's voice," and cannot be understood.

Kangudr (62) of Piedr, who lives at Kavidi in the Wainad, is inspired by Meilitars and speaks Malayalam. He succeeded Tarsvan (62), his father, and Tarsvan had succeeded his father Keithiolv.

Kobuv (61) of Kuudr, is inspired by Meilitars and Kuderol and speaks Malayalam.

Pöteners (54) of Kuudr, is inspired by Petkon and speaks the language of the Mondardsetipol.

[1] From the account of Finicio (Appendix I), it would seem that at one time the *palol* and *wurzel* possessed the power of divination.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

Karkievan (63), the *palol* of the Nòdrs *ti*, was formerly a *teuol*, but gave up divining when he became *palol*. 191 198

All the above belong to the Teivaliol, and the only Tarthar diviner at the present time is Mongudrvan (13) of Kars. He is said to be inspired by the god of Miuni village, and to speak the Toda language. The village of Miuni belongs to the Teivaliol, so that the only Tarthar diviner is inspired by a god connected with the division to which the majority of the diviners belong. 787 791

Two other Tarthar men, Kerveidi (5) and Tevò (3), both of Nòdrs, are said to have been *teuol* at one time, but they have ceased to divine. They succeeded another man of their clan. Kangudr, who is inspired by Meilitars, has to 'dance' or divine before the Kurumbas, and when he does so he dances as a lame man. This custom is reputed to have come down from the time of Meilitars (see p. 210), who danced as a lame man before the Kurumbas, and promised that whenever he came in the future he would dance to the Kurumbas first and then to the Todas. 177 787 791 198 776

It will be noticed that many of the deities by whom the diviners are inspired are not true Toda gods. Petkon, who inspires Midjkudr, Pangudr, and Pöteners, is said to be a hunting god. According to some he was a son of Teikirzi, but is almost certainly not a true Toda deity.

Arivili inspires Tadrners and Ethgudr, who are both reputed to speak the language of the Mondardsetipol, and he is probably a god of these people, a tribe of the Wainad. Ethrol, who also inspires Tadrners, is probably another deity of the same people. I do not know anything about Kuderol, by whom Kobuv is believed to be inspired.

It is noteworthy that the only existing Tarthar *teuol* speaks the Toda language when divining, and is believed to be inspired by a local Toda god; while the diviners belonging to the Teivaliol seem to speak dialects of Malayalam, and many are believed to be inspired by gods who are almost certainly not true Toda deities.

The *teuol* are consulted whenever any misfortune befalls a Toda. The following are various instances in which I have records of resort to divination: sickness or death of a Toda 787 791

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

114 influence has not been escaped by some of those who have
126 previously recorded words from the Toda language. Thus in his *Comparative Dictionary of non-Aryan Languages of India and Higher Asia*,[1] Hunter gives two vocabularies from different sources which he calls Toḍuva and Toḍa, and from the differences between these he thought they might be different dialects. According to Breeks these differences are due to the fact that the compiler of one vocabulary paid exclusive attention to the sounds he heard, while the compiler of the other was influenced by his knowledge of the derivation of the words. I have very little doubt that many of those who have recorded Toda words have not written them down exactly as the Todas said them, but as they ought to have said them according to the usual rules of Dravidian pronunciation.

We find, in consequence, very great diversity in the spelling of Toda words, and when there is agreement, it is of very little value, for many of those who have written on the Todas have evidently adopted the spellings of previous writers, even when they quite misrepresent the real sounds.

197 Another difficulty which besets the investigation of the Toda language is the presence of dialectical differences even in the small community of only eight hundred people. Metz[2] noted such differences, and I found undoubted variations in the vocabularies of the two divisions of the Todas (see p. 687) and suspected variations in pronunciation.

194 Still another difficulty is the large use of sounds, chiefly *sh*, *ch*, and *th*,[3] euphonically inserted in words. Pope notes this as quite a Toda peculiarity, and it adds greatly to the formidable character of this language, though a word of the most appalling complexity may become quite simple when these euphonic (!) sounds are eliminated.

191 Another of the sources of discrepancies in Toda vocabu-
192 laries is the influence of the Badagas to which I have already referred. The Todas are a bilingual people speaking Badaga in their intercourse with other races and keeping Toda for

[1] London, 1868.

[2] *Madras Journ. Lit. and Sci.*, 1857, N.S., vol. i. p. 104.

[3] These sounds have usually been omitted in the Toda words as written in this book.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

themselves. I have already pointed out that the great majority of the names of Toda places and institutions which have been recorded by previous writers are the Badaga names and not the Toda names, and, as might have been expected, many Badaga words have found their way into previously published Toda vocabularies. 191 192

In my own work my procedure was to take down a sentence first through the interpreter, then to go through the words of the sentence one by one asking the Toda to say each word carefully, and often he had to repeat it many times before I could satisfy myself about the nature of the sounds. Often I would get a second or third Toda to say the word, and I have frequently spent many minutes over one word, and have perhaps then been baffled in my attempts to write the word satisfactorily. 126 194

I noticed continually that the Toda words as pronounced by my interpreters were quite different in sound from those which came from the mouths of the Todas themselves. This was especially the case with the vowels, and in the addition of the initial *y*, so well known in the Tamil pronunciation of English. So far as I could detect, there was no trace of this initial *y* in Toda, although it occurs occasionally in some of the previously recorded Toda vocabularies.

These differences between the pronunciation of my interpreter and that of the Todas may often be the source of inconsistencies in my record, for on some occasions, owing to lack of time, I was unable to listen carefully to the Todas themselves, and had to content myself with the words given to me by the interpreter.

PHONETICS

In order to indicate the sounds of the Toda language, I have kept as closely as possible to the generally recognised system in use in India, but have been obliged to adopt many more signs than those usually employed.

The vowel sounds which I distinguished were very numerous. The following vowels and diphthongs certainly occurred:

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAPTER XXIX.

OUTLINES

OF THE

TUDA GRAMMAR.

I. THE ALPHABET.

§ 1. THE TUḌA LANGUAGE has no compositions, written or unwritten, not a ballad nor a scrap of anything to indicate intellectual activity. The Tuḍas, like their buffalos, are fine animals; but they are the least cultivated of the Drâviḍian races. CHAP. XXIX. 212

No trace remains of the employment by them of any written character: it is probable, therefore, that they separated from the other Drâviḍians before the 'ur-sprache' of those tribes was reduced to writing.

§ 2. This language, of which but a very scanty fragment remains in use, has more sounds than any other Drâviḍian dialect, and some of these are peculiar to it, seeming to have been modified by the position and habits of the tribe. 194

The Tuḍas chiefly converse in the open air, calling to each other from one breezy hill-top to another. Their speech sounds like Old Kanarese spoken in the teeth of a gale of wind. 191

4: King G-5 (no date) 1870 AuGoToda AuGo

I took the liberty of doing so in one or two instances, but always found them totally destitute of either utensils or furniture, and even of fixtures, beyond a raised earthen ledge along the foot of the wall, answering the purpose of a table. They were all without any light, beyond that which could find an entrance through the aperture which does duty as a door.

The total strength of the Todas at the present day is probably under eight hundred, of all ages. It is impossible to form an estimate of the original importance and numbers of such a people; but there are indications of former Toda *munds* where none now exist, so that the tribe has doubtless been more numerous at some past epoch.

It is the boast of the Todas that they are hereditary and original lords of the soil, and owners of the whole of the Nilgiris, a claim fully allowed by the other tribes, as evidenced by their paying tribute for the land, and owning a sort of feudal vassalage. Each Toda family has its own territorial property, or district, and the Vadacas living on it are, as already stated, simply tenants, paying an annual tax, or rent in kind, for the land they live on or cultivate. We also, I believe, acknowledge their title by paying a yearly tax for our occupation. The natural peacefulness of the Toda tribe, together with their ignorance of war, make it improbable that their ancestors ever forcibly usurped the territory, and they have doubtless always been regarded by the other tribes as a superior race, entitled to it from immemorial possession and residence.

Their language affords no clue to their origin, and is as strange and peculiar as themselves. It is deep-toned, harsh, and difficult of pronunciation, and without written character. It is neither spoken nor understood by the other hill-tribes with whom they are in almost daily contact, though one would have imagined that the necessity for communication for purposes of barter or exchange would, in course of time, have caused a mutual knowledge of their languages; but it is the Todas only who have acquired the means of communication, having just so much knowledge of the speech of their vassals as is demanded by the most ordinary requirements. The Toda tongue is said to comprise words of Sanskrit and Tamul origin, and to have a certain limited similarity in grammatical structure to the latter language. In all other respects, it differs widely from it or any known tongue either of the vast Indian empire, or of any other country. Recent

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60

fellow tribesmen. To this man finger-prints came as no novelty, since his impressions were recorded both in England and America.

Writing in 1870,* Colonel W. Ross King stated that the Todas had just so much knowledge of the speech of their vassals as is demanded by the most ordinary requirements. At the present day, a few write, and many converse fluently in Tamil. The Nīlgiri C.M.S. Tamil mission has extended its sphere of work to the Todas, and I cannot resist the temptation to narrate a Toda version of the story of Dives and Lazarus. The English say that once upon a time a rich man and a poor man died. At the funeral of the rich man, there was a great tamāsha (spectacle), and many buffaloes were sacrificed. But, for the funeral of the poor man, neither music nor buffaloes were provided. The English believe that in the next world the poor man was as well off as the rich man; so that, when any one dies, it is of no use spending money on the funeral ceremonies. Two mission schools have been established, one at Ootacamund, the other near Paikāra. At the latter I have seen a number of children of both sexes reading elementary Tamil and English, and doing simple arithmetic.

A few years ago a Toda boy was baptised at Tinnevelly, and remained there for instruction. It was hoped that he would return to the hills as an evangelist among his people.† In 1907, five young Toda women were baptised at the C.M.S. Mission chapel, Ootacamund. "They were clothed in white, with a white cloth over their heads, such as the Native Christians wear. A number of Christian Badagas had assembled to witness the ceremony, and join in the service."

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* Aboriginal Tribes of the Nilgiri Hills.
† Madras Diocesan Magazine, November, 1907.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
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of this, the rule was made that the body should always be swung three times over the fire before it is finally placed thereon." [Colonel Marshall narrates the story that a Toda who had revived from what was thought his death-bed, has been observed parading about, very proud and distinguished looking, wearing the finery with which he had been bedecked for his own funeral, and which he would be permitted to carry till he really departed this life.] As soon as the pyre was fairly ablaze, the mourners, with the exception of some of the female relatives, left the sn̄ōla, and the men, congregating on the summit of a neighbouring hill, invoked their god. Four men, seized, apparently in imitation of the Kota Dēvādi, with divine frenzy, began to shiver and gesticulate wildly, while running blindly to and fro with closed eyes and shaking fists. They then began to talk in Malayālam, and offer an explanation of an extraordinary phenomenon, which had appeared in the form of a gigantic figure, which disappeared as suddenly as it appeared. At the annual ceremony of walking through fire (hot ashes) in that year, two factions arose owing to some dissension, and two sets of ashes were used. This seems to have annoyed the gods, and those concerned were threatened with speedy ruin. But the whole story was very vague. The possession by some Todas of a smattering of Malayālam is explained by the fact that, when grazing their buffaloes on the northern and western slopes of the Nīlgiris, they come in contact with Malayālam-speaking people from the neighbouring Malabar district.

At the funeral of a man (a leper), the corpse was placed in front of the entrance to a circle of loose stones about a yard and a half in diameter, which had been specially constructed for the occasion. Just before the buffalo sacrifice, a man of the Paiki clan standing near

9:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1938) 1939 AW60 Toda AW60

THE CHRISTIAN TODAS *

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ABSTRACT

A description of the Christian Todas in their relations with the flourishing culture of the tribe. They retain in the economic sphere a dependence on the tribal pastures, and show a tendency to retain the old type of economic partnership with individual Kotas. The converts retain their Toda names, even when these belong to the tribal religious sphere; in naming children born within the Christian community there is a tendency not to give Toda names. Cross-cousin marriage is followed when possible; disputes on matrimonial affairs follow tribal patterns. The tribal dance and song-technique are retained, and one Christian lyric of great beauty was recorded. The tribe treats the Christians as outsiders in general, but several links remain, notably in the meeting of obligations by both sides when marriages take place. There are attempts by the tribe to force the Christians to meet obligations on the occasion of tribal funerals; when they are met, it is generally due to compulsion. An attempt is made to evaluate the whole situation in terms of the attitudes of tribal members.

DURING a linguistic field-trip among the Todas of the Nilgiris in South India, I came into contact also with the section of the tribe who have become Christians. In fact, the two interpreters whom I used in my investigations into the Toda language were Christian Todas, since it is only among these that any fluent knowledge of English is so far to be found. A number of interesting episodes of Christian Toda life came to light during the period of nearly three years in which I had intermittent contact with the two communities. It seems useful to collect these and to attempt an evaluation of the elements of the tribal culture which have survived among the Christians and of the relations between the tribal Todas and the Christians. The attempt is worthwhile since studies of Christianized communities which exist by the side of the parent communities with the original culture in full working-order are rare.

The only mission which has worked among the Todas in recent times and made converts is the Church of England Zenana Mission Society. The work was begun in 1890 by Miss Catherine F. Ling [1] and seems to

* This paper represents a small part of the work which I was enabled to do in South India with the aid of the American Council of Learned Societies in 1935-6 and of the American Philosophical Society (Penrose Fund) in 1936-8.

[1] Two small books by this lady describe her work: *Dawn in Toda Land* (3rd ed., Madras, S. P. C. K. Press, 1919) and *Sunrise on the Nilgiris* (London, Zenith Press, ?1933). There is little of anthropological interest in these, which were of course written as descriptions of missionary work; the resistance of the tribe however is well brought out and some of the accounts of converts' histories amount almost to life-histories such as anthropologists gather.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

776 Then come two important demi-gods: a) *Kwotèn*, a man-god whose fabulous life is closely associated with one of the Toda clans (that of Pan); Rivers believed him to have been an outstanding Toda personality who was possibly posthumously deified. b) *Kwoto*, another man-god; he is closely associated with the clan of Melgarsh; among the legendary feats which he is reputed to have accomplished is that of tying down the sun between two mountains and of taking it to drink at a stream every day, in order to prove to the gods, who had challenged him, that he possessed supernatural powers.

197 The language spoken by the Todas is a Dravidian dialect. According to Emeneau, it is more akin to Canarese (Kanada) than to Tamil, although it cannot be said to be a very close relative of the former either. All Todas are, anyhow, bilingual, and very often even tri-
●191 lingual, conversing freely in Badaga with their neighbours and in Tamil with visitors from the plains. As they have no script of their own,
212 when they occasionally want to write something (such as commemora-
177 tive inscriptions on temple doors) they make use of Tamil characters. I have never seen them use Roman letters, but I have been told (by Miss C. F. Ling for instance) that although not habitual, this is sometimes also done.

234 The economy of the Todas is a pastoral one, large herds of great
433 horned buffaloes, which do not resemble those of the plains, being kept for their milk and milk products. Many of these animals are
[778] quite ordinary (*putir*) but the great majority of them are pedigree cattle of a sacred nature (*postir*), their ancestry being calculated through the cows. They are believed to have been given to the tribe by the gods. They are grouped in four principal categories, each graded hierarchically. Thus the lowest category is that of the *wursulir*, then come the
[778] *nodrovair* and the *Kugvalir*, and finally, the highest and most sacred of all, the *tiir*.

[648] Like other pastoral people, the Todas consider it degrading to take
[241] to agriculture, and repeated attempts by the Indian Government to induce them to till the soil have miserably failed. When given a field
[427] to cultivate, they usually let it out to a Badaga for a nominal sum, preferring to carry on with their animal husbandry and its semi-nomadic form of life, a tradition deeply ingrained in them and to which they are greatly attached. Most of the milk, butter and buttermilk
[439] produced by the tribe is consumed by its members, but a certain amount is sold in the local market, and the money thus earned made use of to
433 buy other foods and everyday commodities. On the whole, the Toda
511